



Department of Justice

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**IDENTITY THIEF PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD AND COUNTERFEITING
RELATED CRIMES AFTER BEING ARRESTED WITH HUNDREDS OF
FRAUDULENT IDENTITY DOCUMENTS**

COLUMBUS – Thomas Hastings, age 55, formerly of Cincinnati, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of bank fraud, one count of possession of false identification information, and one count of possession of counterfeit money after investigators arrested him with at least 30 fraudulent IDs from Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia and Indiana and hundreds of stolen credit card and Social Security numbers.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and the leadership of the Multi Jurisdictional Counterfeit Check Task Force announced the plea entered today before United States District Judge Michael H. Watson.

The Multi Jurisdictional Counterfeit Check Task Force is comprised of agents from the Secret Service; the Police Departments from Westerville, Grove City, Baltimore, Powell, Genoa Township and Reynoldsburg; the Franklin County Sheriff's Office; the Ohio Attorney General's Office; and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

According to a statement of facts filed with Hastings' plea, a security guard at the motel where Hastings was staying under an assumed name recognized him from a news release issued by the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

Task Force members arrested Hastings on January 16, 2008 and found at least 30 different ID's, three Social Security cards of others, 28 birth certificates of other people, counterfeit tax statements and military records, 101 printed counterfeit checks, blank check stock, 222 copies of customer checks and 312 copies of credit card receipts stolen from a business in Mansfield, Franklin County court documents containing approximately 637 different Social Security numbers, names and dates of birth, \$730 in counterfeit U.S. currency and computer equipment.

Under the plea agreement, the maximum penalty that Hastings faces is 30 years in prison for bank fraud, up to 15 years for possession of counterfeit identities, and up to 20 years for possession of the counterfeit currency.

Judge Watson will set a date for sentencing for Hastings, who has been in custody since his arrest.

“The efforts by the task force members to share information and work together paid off in protecting possibly hundreds of people from having their identities stolen,” Lockhart said. “I want to commend the efforts of the officers and agents who make up this task force.”

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